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VEDIC LITERATURE

A QUICK OVERVIEW

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For the purpose of this paper, Vedic literature, which is here often referred to simply as the 'Veda', is understood as comprehending the three major literary genres, namely, the *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* (which would also include the *Āraṇyakas*), and the *Upaniṣads*, of the four Vedas, namely, the *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda*. However, a reference needs to be made here to the much vaunted terminological statement, namely, *mantrabrāhmaṇayor vedanāmadheyam* ("the *Mantra* and the *Brāhmaṇa* are together given the name Veda"). Strictly speaking this statement does not constitute a proper definition of the term *Veda*; its relevance is obviously limited to ritual contexts as is indicated by another statement, *mantrabrāhmaṇe yajñasya pramāṇam*. Incidentally, there also existed a school of Vedists which believed that only the *mantras* constituted the Veda (*kaiścit mantrāṇām eva vedatvam ākhyātam* – Haradatta in his commentary on the *ĀpŚS*; Dhūrtasvāmin also makes a similar observation in his commentary on the *ĀpŚS*). It may be further mentioned that, in the Vedic texts themselves, the word *veda* has been used in various senses – such as *veda* as a particular kind of sacred utterance which is distinct from *ṛk*, *yajus*, *sāman*, and *brahman* (AV 15.3.6-8; TS 7.5. 11.2; AB 4.5); *veda* as more or less identical with *ṛk*, *yajus*, *sāman* (ŚPB 5.5.5. 3-5); *vedas* (plural) as the three infinite sacred literary mountains) (TB 3.10.11. 3-4); and *veda*, compounded with *ṛk*, *yajus*, and *sāman*, to form the names *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Sāmaveda* (ŚPB

11.5.8.4). Of course, all this need not prejudice in any way the wider implication of the word *veda* which is assumed here mainly for historical and practical reasons.

One of the essential features of the Veda is the claim of *apauruṣeyatva* which is made on behalf of it¹. It is, indeed, this feature which emphatically brings out the character of the Veda as a scripture. The Veda is *apauruṣeya*, that is, no human agency has been responsible for the creation of the Veda. However, the references to the *apauruṣeyatva* of the Veda in the Vedic texts themselves are but few and not particularly explicit or compelling. It is mostly in the later ancillary literature that the *apauruṣeyatva* has been made the starting point of Vedic exegesis.

The views regarding the exact significance of *apauruṣeyatva*, which is invariably and understandably linked up with the doctrines of *vedanīyatva* (the eternality of the Veda) and *vedaprāmāṇya* (the ultimate and absolute epistemological authority of the Veda), have been manifestly varied. The Buddhist view challenging the authority of the Veda such as, for instance, the one expressed in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* of Śāntarakṣita, namely, that the Veda cannot be regarded as eternal and divine for the reason that it deals with many unpleasant topics like *kāma*, *mithyātva*, *prāṇihimsā*, etc. may not detain us here. Udayana has, in his own way, duly rebutted this and similar other views in the first chapter of his *Nyāyakusumāñjali*. In the second chapter of that work, Udayana seeks to prove that the authority of the Veda rests on the fact that God is the author of the Veda. This Naiyāyika view finds support from the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* I. 1.3 which asserts that the *Āmnāya* (that is, the Veda) possesses absolute authority because it constitutes the word of God. Verily, such a view seems to have been clearly anticipated in some Vedic texts themselves. The *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 14.4.3.11 and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* 2.4.10, for instance, say that it is, indeed, the very breath (*niḥśvasita*) of the Great Being which has manifested itself as the *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, etc. Incidentally, Sāyaṇa has introduced his Veda-commentaries with the glorification of the Great God whose breath constitutes the Vedas and who has created the entire universe from the Vedas. The Mīmāṃsakas, on the other hand, do not question the authority of the Veda but they altogether rule out the necessity of postulating any author of the Veda.

1. The following discussion about *apauruṣeyatva*, *nīyatva*, and *prāmāṇya* of the Veda is repeated in the Appendix of "The *Ṛgveda-saṃhitā*", ABORI 80. 10-13.

According to them, one cannot speak of the origination (*utpatti*) of the Veda, which is after all made up of *śabdas* which are eternal by nature; one can only speak of its manifestation (*abhivyakti*). The Veda has not originated either from God or from man. It is self-existent and axiomatic (*svataḥsiddha*). The Sāṃkhyas, who do not believe in the existence of God, are still reckoned as *āstika* because they recognize the ultimate authority of the Veda. A fairly representative view of the *Purāṇas*, which are themselves traditionally regarded as the fifth Veda, seems to be that, as the sages performed severe penance, the *mantras* of the different Vedas appeared before them severally in the same manner as in the previous *manvantaras* (*Vāyu-Purāṇa* 59-60-61). There are also indications in some *Purāṇas* that they accepted the *pauruṣeyatva* of the extant *Saṃhitās* of the Veda because they had come into being after the promotion of the *Śrauta* cult. The eternality of the Veda may accordingly imply (1) that the Veda has not originated either from God or from man, but is eternal by its very nature, or (2) that it is God-created and God-given, or (3) that the Veda, though *nitya*, has manifested itself anew in every *yuga*.

It is suggested that the Veda is not 'revelation' in the sense in which, for instance, the *Bible* is. In the *Bible* one can trace, from the *Book of Genesis* to the *Gospels*, a gradual but progressive self-disclosure of a divine person by means of acts accompanied by words. It may, however, be pointed out that, in the Veda, instead of the 'person', it is the 'doctrine' which may be said to form the object of revelation. The Veda, it may be further stated, is believed to be *apauruṣeya* because it has not emanated, in a normal way, from an ordinary man (*puruṣa*) but is the outcome of the 'seeing' (*darśana*) of the eternal ultimate reality and of the 'hearing' (*śruti*) of the rhythm of the infinite by inspired seers through their superhuman (*apauruṣeya*) intuitive and insightful faculty. The metaphors of 'seeing' and 'hearing' employed in this connection are intended to convey the directness and the holistic and supremely convincing nature of that experience. The resulting Vedic *mantras* competently serve as the live wires of communication between the human and the divine.

The assumption of *Vedaprāmāṇya* follows from the fact that the Veda, being *apauruṣeya*, is not contaminated by the frailties and the inadequacies of the human sense-organs and intellect. That is why, in the Hindu way of religio-philosophical thinking, among the valid means of knowledge, scriptural authority (*śabda*) is placed over and above sensual perception (*pratyakṣa*) and intellectual reasoning (*anumāna*). The *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* 2.4 has described the ultimate reality as that 'wherefrom words turn back, together

with the mind, not having attained it.' The word *veda* denotes knowledge which is not accessible to the normal means of knowledge and which defies any contradiction by the knowledge derived through history, science, reason, and common sense. If understood in its proper perspective, the acceptance of *vedaprāmāṇya* cannot certainly be regarded as an admission of the defeat of intellect or reason; it rather represents a sort of epistemological optimism.

In the context of the acceptance of *Vedaprāmāṇya*, one needs to take note of a couple of vital points. Firstly, the Veda contains such multifarious material that it is almost impossible to derive from it any one single final coherent doctrine or doctrines. One has, therefore, inevitably to have recourse to the method of selection and syncretism. Secondly, though all orthodox (*āstika*) systems of thought swear by *vedaprāmāṇya*, this has not resulted, as would be expected, in their being hackneyedly uniform. The reason for this is that the propounders of these systems had full freedom in the interpretation of the Veda. They could, accordingly, derive different doctrines from the same text. It would, indeed, appear that their claim regarding the *vedaprāmāṇya* was merely formal and epistemologically motivated. It may even be argued that *vedaprāmāṇya* was not the result of the *apauruṣeyatva* of the Veda but that *apauruṣeyatva* was imposed on the Veda in order to bestow on it ultimate *prāmāṇya* and thereby overcome the contingent epistemological dead-lock.

For a proper understanding of the Veda, it is necessary to take note of some of its distinctive features as literature. The language of the Veda is, in many respects, different from the classical Sanskrit language. It may, therefore, be referred to as Vedic. For one thing, it is Vedic (or Old Indo-Aryan) which can be said to be properly representing 'Indo' in the name 'Indo-European' given to a specific group of ancient languages. Further, Sanskrit language, as we know it, is more or less a static language because it is, as it were, tied down by rigorous rules of grammar. Accordingly, it has remained, for the most part, an 'invariable' in the time-space context. As against this, Vedic has throughout been prone to dialectal development. Thus, for instance, the Vedic of the *R̥gvedamantras* shows certain linguistic peculiarities which are absent in the Vedic of the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*. A reference may also be made to the vital role played in Vedic by accent (*svara*) both rhythmically and semantically. Another feature of the Veda, which is important from the point of view of literary history, is the emergence, in course of time, of various Vedic *śākhās*. These *śākhās* have sponsored, in many cases, their own recensions of the different Vedic texts.

Besides the claims of *apauruṣeyatva*, *nityatva*, and *prāmāṇya*, of the Vedic literature that literature has come to be regarded also as the fountain-head of all knowledge. Religion and philosophy, history and law, fine arts and natural and technological sciences – the beginnings of all these branches of knowledge are traditionally traced back to Vedic sources. Another point. The Vedic literature has been handed down from generation to generation by means of oral transmission. It is said that the Veda was not written and read; it was recited and heard (*śruti*). Presumably it was this oral transmission which had helped the Vedic texts having been preserved in perfect condition. The different modes of reciting the *mantras* of the *Ṛgveda* (*pāṭhas*) may be specially mentioned in this context. The oral transmission has allowed hardly any scope for *variae lectiones* in the Veda. Of course the possibility of some fragments of the Veda having been lost in the process of oral transmission cannot be entirely ruled out. It is also not unimaginable that some literature of non-Vedic character, which had been produced in the Vedic age, was lost because no special efforts, as in the case of the Veda, were made to preserve it. Finally, unlike the scriptures of several other religions, the Veda, which has come to be generally regarded as the scripture of Hinduism, is not one single book; it is, verily, a whole library and literature. Looking at things from a strictly historical point of view, one would easily realize that the Veda which, as pointed out earlier, comprises the *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* (and the *Āraṇyakas*), and the *Upaniṣads*, could not have been produced by one author – indeed, not even by one generation of authors. It must have been the outcome of the religio-literary activity of many generations of authors, which chronologically spread over at least two millennia (cir. 2500 B. C. - 400 B. C.) and which geographically extended from the river Oxus in the region of Balkh (where, in their original home, the proto-Aryans must have composed at least some Vedic *mantras* in their archaic form) to the river Sadānīrā in Videha, which, according to *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 1.4.14-17, formed the easternmost boundary of the Vedic settlements in the days of Yājñavalkya.

The Vedic corpus as a whole is made up of four principal constituents, namely, the *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda*, each of these constituents comprising three literary genres, namely, the *Samhitā*, the *Brāhmaṇa-Āraṇyaka*, and the *Upaniṣad*. It may, however, be noted that the terms *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda*, and *Atharvaveda* do not occur in the early Vedic texts. They occur nowhere in the *Samhitās* (the word *Ṛgveda* occurs in the *Ṛgveda-khila* 4.2.6) nor in the early parts of the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* 25.7 and the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 11.5.8.3-6, which

obviously belong to the later strata of those texts, use these terms perhaps for the first time. These and some other Vedic texts use the terms *Ṛgveda* etc. in singular almost in the same sense in which they are understood today. The practice also seems to have been prevalent to use the terms *ṛk* (*ṛcaḥ*) or *Ṛgveda*, *yajus* (*yajūṁṣi*) or *Yajurveda*, and *sāman* (*sāmāni*) or *Sāmaveda* indiscriminately. Similarly, the terms *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda*, and *Atharvaveda* are seen to have been more commonly used to denote only the *Samhitās* of those four Vedas and not all the three literary genres comprised by those Vedas.

The Vedas are said to be either three or four in number – the *Atharvaveda* being omitted when only three Vedas (e.g. *trayī vidyā* as in *AB* 25.8 and *ŚPB* 11.5.8.4) are mentioned. The *Puruṣasūkta* (*RV* X. 90.9) mentions only *Ṛcaḥ*, *Sāmāni*, and *Yajus* as having been born out of the sacrifice of the cosmic *Puruṣa*, though some exegetes are inclined to understand the word *chandāṁsi* occurring in that context as denoting the *Atharvaveda*. The *Ṛgveda* X. 71.11, on the other hand, unequivocally, though indirectly, mentions four Vedas, namely, *Ṛcaḥ*, *Gāyatra* (= *Sāmaveda*), *Jātavidyā* (= *Atharvaveda*), and *yajñasya mātṛā* (= *Yajurveda*). The *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 4.17.1 ff. speaks of *Prajāpati* having been responsible for the generation of the *Ṛcaḥ* from *Agni*, the *Yajūṁṣi* from *Vāyu*, and the *Sāmāni* from *Āditya* – *Agni*, *Vāyu*, and *Āditya* having themselves been extracted as essences respectively of the three worlds, namely, the earth, the midregion, and the sky. Thereafter, from the *Ṛcaḥ*, the *Yajūṁṣi*, and the *Sāmāni* were extracted respectively *bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ*, and *svaḥ*. Elsewhere, the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 7.1.4 mentions five Vedas, namely, the *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Ātharvaṇa* as the fourth, and the *Itihāsapurāṇa* as the fifth. Some Buddhist texts also refer to five Vedas, but they name them slightly differently. The views such as that *Bādarāyaṇa* divided one Veda into four, or that the four Vedas are related to the four social orders, or that the four Vedas respectively deal with the four principal themes, namely, the *Ṛgveda* with *viññāna*, the *Yajurveda* with *karma*, the *Sāmaveda* with *upāsana*, and the *Atharvaveda* with *jñāna*, are obviously untenable.

It would be convenient to trace the logical and chronological development of the Vedic literature not in terms of the four Vedas but in terms of the three literary genres comprised by those Vedas, each one of which genres may be said to be representing a distinct ideological trend. Thus we may speak of the *Samhitā*-period, the *Brāhmaṇa*-period, and the *Upaniṣad*-period of the

Veda. The word *Samhitā* (collection) implies that the *Samhitā*-period was preceded by a period of scattered and unorganized *mantras*.² In the course of their migration towards the east, some tribes from among the Indo-European-speaking people, who, in view of their later history, may be called Proto-Indo-Iranians or Proto-Aryans, settled down in the region round about Balkh in Central Asia for a pretty long time. It was here that they developed the proto-Indo-Iranian or proto-Aryan language, which was the direct ancestor of the Vedic and the ancient Iranian languages, as also the rudiments of the proto-Aryan religion and mythology, which, broadly speaking, revolved round the cosmic mythology and the simple fire-cult and Soma-cult. They began producing *mantras* relating to their religion and mythology – this *mantra*-producing activity having gained particularly great momentum among those Proto-Aryans who had left their home in Balkh and were marching towards Saptasindhu (which roughly comprised Afghanistan, the North-West Frontier Province, and Panjab). These enterprising pioneers, who may now be referred to as Vedic Aryans, introduced new gods in their pantheon to suit their new way of life, the most prominent among them having been the mythologised human hero Indra. While new *mantras*, mainly embodying prayer, panegyric, and mythology, continued to be produced, the old surviving *mantras* necessarily underwent some revision. Side by side with these *mantras* relating to the religion of the classes among the Vedic Aryans, there were also produced *mantras* relating to the religion of the masses, which consisted of magic, incantation, and witchcraft. These two types of *mantras* may, indeed, be said to mark the beginnings of the Veda.

It may be presumed that the Vedic Aryans were greatly impressed by the richness of nature in Saptasindhu. Fertility of the soil, abundance of water, regularity of seasons, invigorating sunshine – all these environmental factors must have been responsible for their decision to settle down in that region. Thus, in course of time, there came into existence in Saptasindhu various settlements of the Vedic Aryans. The Vedic Aryans now began to lead a more settled life, though the activities of some of them in the direction of further conquest, colonization, and civilization had not altogether ceased. This change in their way of life had its inevitable effect on their religious ideology, practices, and literature. For one thing, the Vedic poet-priests undertook to collect together all the scattered old and new *mantras*, group them into *sūktas* or hymns, wherever necessary, give them a fixed literary form, and organize and arrange

2. See "The Ṛgveda Samhitā", *ABORI* 80.1-13.

them according to a well-conceived plan. This resulted in the emergence of the two collections – the *Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā* or the collection of the *sūktas* relating to the religion of the classes and the *Atharvaveda-Saṁhitā* or the collection of the *sūktas* relating to the religion of the masses. Here it is needless to add that we can speak of the religion of the classes and the religion of the masses only in a very broad sense and mainly for the sake of the convenience of understanding. It was also inevitable that some *mantras* of one kind should have found their way in the collection of the *mantras* of the other kind.

The *Saṁhitā*-period was for the Vedic Aryans a period of growing stability and prosperity in social, political, and economic spheres. Their various settlements soon assumed the form of territorial states and monarchical kingdoms, though still preserving a very strong sense of tribal identity. The Vedic Aryans were essentially small groups of migrants who had become conscious of their marked differences from the indigenous people in respect of complexion, physiognomy, language, and religion. They do not, however, seem to have forcibly imposed their culture upon the latter – it was rather a case of gradual diffusion of their culture. Their new way of life generated among the Vedic Aryans a sense of security and afforded them enough leisure. These two factors eventually encouraged their simple religion steadily transforming itself into a complex religion. Verily, there now evolved a new religious cult, the cult of Vedic sacrifice, which soon superseded the simple religion which was reflected in the two *Saṁhitās*. Of course the notion of sacrifice as such was by no means unknown to the early Vedic Aryans. What, however, now happened was that sacrifice gradually passed through a process of rigorous institutionalization whereby it came to be loaded with various complicated details concerning such items as the type of sacrifice, the variety of sacred fires, the number of officiating priests, the time and place of the performance, the formulas to be recited, the oblations to be offered, the utensils to be used, etc. This new complex institution of sacrifice naturally demanded new literature which would be devoted, more or less exclusively, to the deliberation of the theory and practice (particularly, the latter) of the Vedic ritual. And such literature had, indeed, been in the making. It comprised the two *Yajurveda-Saṁhitās* and the *Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā*, which, though traditionally characterized as *Saṁhitās*, were evidently intended to be subservient to Vedic ritual, and more particularly the *Brāhmaṇas*.

The *Śukla-Yajurveda-Saṁhitā* is a collection of the *mantras* (verses and formulas) to be recited at various sacrifices, which are separated from the

brāhmaṇa-portions (the explanatory matter in prose). The *Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda-Saṃhitā* deals with almost the entire Vedic ritual and combines within itself both the *mantras* and the *brāhmaṇa*-portions. As for the *Sāmaveda-Saṃhitā*, it can hardly be regarded as an independent literary work, for, it consists of verses, mostly derived from the eighth and especially from the ninth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā*, which were meant to be chanted at various rites of the Soma-sacrifice. The *Brāhmaṇas*, which are in prose, may, in every sense, be regarded as the veritable text-books of Vedic ritual. In them, all the minute details of sacrifice were marshalled and discussed thread-bare – and this with such profound seriousness as to imply that nothing else mattered in the world. And, in a sense, nothing else but sacrifice did, indeed, matter so far as the Vedic people in that period were concerned. They were persuaded to believe that a sacrifice could either be perfect and blameless in all its minutest details and thus become completely efficacious or it could be deficient in one single minor detail and thereby become, negatively, not only a failure but, positively, operate as a source of danger and disaster. During the *Brāhmaṇa*-period, the sacrificial procedure continued to be loaded with so many details that it became absolutely impossible for an ordinary individual to master those intricacies of ritual and adopt that ritual as a form of worship on his own. The natural consequence of this was that an independent special class of priests came into being and soon attained great prestige. Those priests claimed that every single detail of the sacrificial procedure was duly prescribed and sanctioned by the scriptures and that the correct interpretation of the scriptures was admittedly the one which the priests alone would offer. The *Brāhmaṇa*-period was thus largely characterized by the social and intellectual domination of the priestly class over the other classes of society.

The *Āraṇyakas*, which are generally regarded as the concluding portions of the *Brāhmaṇas*, mark the transition from the *Brāhmaṇa*-period to the *Upaniṣad*-period, both ideologically and stylistically. The name *Āraṇyaka* would suggest that these texts contained the religious instruction intended for the people who had become averse to the Vedic ritual and had, therefore, retired to the forest for spiritual solace. The teachings of the *Āraṇyakas*, which invested the sacrificial and other religious rites with profound symbolical and philosophical significance, were considered to be too esoteric and sacred to be imparted to all and sundry.

But the truly conspicuous reaction to the twofold priestly domination generated by the Vedic sacrificial ritual appeared in the form of the *Upaniṣads*.

A new band of thinkers came forward and challenged the spiritual validity of the sacrificial system as developed in the *Brāhmaṇa*-period and, to some extent, even the authority of the scriptures on which that system was claimed to have been based. The attitude of inquiry began to replace the attitude of blind acceptance. People were encouraged to ask questions which they did with an avidity which was but natural after a long period of intellectual stagnation. These questions extended from such a naive one as 'How can a red cow give white milk?' to such profound ones as those relating to the nature of man, universe, and the ultimate reality. The *Upaniṣads* dealt with these latter and other related questions with inspired insight and may be said to have thereby marked the beginnings of the exclusive philosophical writing, if not of philosophical thinking.

It must be clearly understood that the three periods of the history of Vedic literature, which have been referred to above, can by no means be demarcated in a hard and fast manner. The Veda is like a rainbow. Just as it is not possible precisely to mark out where one colour in the rainbow ends and the other begins – one colour almost imperceptibly fades out into the other – even so it is not possible to say where exactly one Vedic period ends and the other begins. There is also another significant aspect of this metaphor. Like a rainbow, the Veda, too, stands out as one of the most remarkable examples of unity in diversity.

Appendix

[The principal texts, which are generally regarded as making up the Veda, are listed below :]

<i>Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Śākala recension) (Bāṣkala recension of the <i>Ṛgveda</i> is also claimed to have existed.)
<i>Atharvaveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Śaunakīya recension)
<i>Atharvaveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Paippalāda recension)
<i>Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Kauthuma recension)
<i>Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Jaiminiya recension)
<i>Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Rāṇāyaniya recension)
<i>Śukla-Yajurveda-Saṁhitā</i> (<i>Vājasaneyi-Saṁhitā</i>)	(Mādhyandina recension)

<i>Śukla-Yajurveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Kāṇva recension)
<i>(Vājasaneyi-Saṁhitā)</i>	
<i>Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Taittirīya [Āpastamba] recension)
<i>Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Maitrāyaṇīya recension)
<i>Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Kāthaka recension)
<i>Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda-Saṁhitā</i>	(Kapiṣṭhala-Kātha recension)

The Brāhmaṇas of the Ṛgveda

Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa
Kauṣītaki-(Śāṅkhāyana-) Brāhmaṇa

The Brāhmaṇa of the Atharvaveda

Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa

The Brāhmaṇas of the Sāmaveda

Adbhuta-Brāhmaṇa (= last six chapters of the
Ṣaḍviṁśa-Brāhmaṇa)
Ārṣeya-Brāhmaṇa
Chāndogya-Brāhmaṇa
Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa
Jaiminiya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa
Devatādhyāya-Brāhmaṇa
Pañcaviṁśa-(Tāṇdyamahā-, Praudha-) Brāhmaṇa
Mantra-Brāhmaṇa
Vamśa-Brāhmaṇa
Śātyāyana-Brāhmaṇa
Ṣaḍviṁśa-Brāhmaṇa
Saṁhitopaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa
Sāmavidhāna-Brāhmaṇa

The Brāhmaṇa of the Śukla-Yajurveda

Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (Mādhyandina recension)
Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (Kāṇva recension)

The Brāhmaṇas of the Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda

Kāthaka-Brāhmaṇa

Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa

The Āraṇyakas of the Ṛgveda

Aitareya-Āraṇyaka

Kauṣītaki-(Śāṅkhāyāna-) Āraṇyaka

(The *Āraṇyaka-Saṃhitā*, which is an appendix to the *pūrvārcika* of the *Sāmaveda* and the stanzas (*sāmans*) of which are included in the *Āraṇyagāna*, is sometimes mentioned in the context of the *Āraṇyakas*. Similarly, the last, that is, the fourteenth, book of the Mādhyandina *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* is called *Āraṇyaka-Kāṇḍa*. Chapters 4-9 of the *Āraṇyaka-Kāṇḍa* constitute the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*.)

The Āraṇyakas of the Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda

Kaṭha-Āraṇyaka

Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka

(Over 200 texts call themselves *Upaniṣads*, but they include such recent works as the *Khristopaniṣad* and the *Allopaniṣad*. The *Muktikopaniṣad* gives a traditional list of 108 *Upaniṣads*, but, even out of these, many texts hardly possess the genuine *upaniṣadic* character. Many other late *Upaniṣads* are essentially sectarian and are usually divided, in accordance with their main tendencies, into various classes such as Sāmānya-Vedānta, Yoga, Saṃnyāsa, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, and Śākta. However, some of these are, for different reasons, included in the following list of Vedic *Upaniṣads*.)

The Upaniṣads of the Ṛgveda

Aitareya-Upaniṣad

Kauṣītaki-(Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa-)Upaniṣad

The Upaniṣads of the Atharvaveda

Kaivalya-Upaniṣad

Cūlikā-Upaniṣad

Jābāla-Upaniṣad
Praṇava-Upaniṣad
Praśna-Upaniṣad
Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad
Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

The Upaniṣads of the Sāmaveda

Kena-(Talavakāra-)Upaniṣad
Chāndogya-Upaniṣad
Jaiminiya-Upaniṣad (= *Jaiminiya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa*)
Vajrasūcikā-Upaniṣad

The Upaniṣads of the Śukla-Yajurveda

Īśāvāsya-(Īśa-Īśā-)Upaniṣad
Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad
Paiṅgala-Upaniṣad
Subāla-Upaniṣad

The Upaniṣads of the Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda

Kaṭha-Upaniṣad
Taittirīya-Upaniṣad
Mahānārāyaṇa-(Yājñikī-)Upaniṣad
Maitrāyaṇa-(Maitrāyaṇīya-, Maitrī-) Upaniṣad
Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad

**Other Upaniṣads (usually referred to as
 Sāmānya-Vedānta-Upaniṣads)**

Ārṣeya-Upaniṣad (SV ?)
Chāgaleya-Upaniṣad
Bāṣkalamantra-Upaniṣad (RV ?)
Śaunaka-Upaniṣad